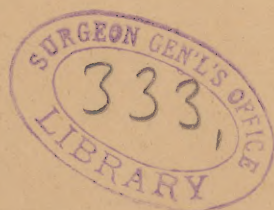


HOWARD. (H.)

Medical history of  
Louis David Riel during  
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## MEDICAL HISTORY OF LOUIS DAVID RIEL DURING HIS DETENTION IN LONGUE POINTE ASYLUM.

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According to my physical idea, an intellectual, moral man is a physiological man, a sane man, and a *non*-criminal.

According to my physical idea, all criminal men are either insane from pathological defect, or fools from teratological defect, of the psycho-physical organization, the *materia cogitans*.

According to my close observation of the insane, a large majority of them know right from wrong. Therefore, a man's knowledge of his idea of right and wrong is no proof of his sanity.

The law's definition of sanity and responsibility is, that a man who is a criminal, and knows right from wrong, is a sane man, and responsible for his conduct.

According to my observation, Louis David Riel had a perfect knowledge of what he believed to be right and wrong, but being a great criminal, and guilty of bad conduct, I considered him a fool, in virtue of a teratological defect in his psycho-physical organization.

I think his friends knew my idea of him, and therefore it was that they did not bring me to give evidence in his case when he was on trial. My evidence would have been that I believed him a teratological fool, but that, according to his idea, he knew right from wrong.

As I have already explained, I consider every criminal to be either a fool or insane because of pathological or teratological defect in their psycho-physical organizations; and most certainly



I have known many persons *hung* for murder that gave stronger proofs of being insane or fools than was given by Louis D. Riel.

I wish law-makers were physiological men, and were governed in making laws by physical science or natural physiology; then all criminals would be recognized as insane or fools.

As the Dominion Government has been justified in their conduct by a large vote of the House of Commons, and the Provincial Government has been justified by a large vote of the Legislative Assembly, I shall give the history of Louis D. Riel while he was under my care in the asylum of St. Jean de Dieu. What I am about to write is the truth. I am not guided by politics, nor by nationality or religion. I write it for the sake of physical science, and I am writing from notes that I have kept that cover nine pages of foolscap.

Now, in the registry books of Longue Pointe Asylum it is recorded that Louis David Riel was admitted into that institution under the name of Louis R. David on the 6th of March, 1876, and discharged from thence and sent to Beauport on the 15th of January, 1877. How that record was made I do not know? The public has accepted it as a *true* record, and all the public-speaking that I have heard of, and all the newspapers that I have read, have all been acting under the impression that Louis David Riel was in the asylum at Longue Pointe from the 6th of March, 1876, to the 15th of January, 1877. Now, although I blame no one, I have to testify that the record is *not true*. On the contrary, Louis David Riel was discharged from the asylum at Longue Pointe and sent to Beauport on the 19th of May, 1876. So that instead of being in the asylum for ten months, he was only in it two months and thirteen days. During that time I was physician to the asylum, having no power in it to either admit or discharge patients, but simply prescribe for them; yet it was by my advice that Louis David Riel, under the name of Louis R. David, was admitted into the asylum by the Mother Superior, as a Government patient, on the 6th of March, 1876, and by my recommendation to the Hon. Provincial Secretary, he was sent to Beauport on the 19th of May, 1876. I am particular in pointing out that he was discharged at *my* recommendation, because in all other cases I could discharge no

one, except advised by the Mother Superior, and Dr. Perrault had to sign the paper with me. But in this instance there was no legal form.

With the foregoing information, many gentlemen will be wonderfully surprised and regret their speech.

How did Louis D. Riel get admitted into the asylum of St. Jean de Dieu at Longue Pointe on the 6th of March, 1876?

On or about the 5th of March, 1876, the Rev. Mother Superior came into the office where I was and told me there was a gentleman in the other room who desired to get a patient admitted, but as there were serious circumstances connected with the case, she refused to admit him without my consent, and if I would go into the room with her she would introduce me to her visitor. I did go with her, and she introduced me to the gentleman who was making the application on behalf of one with whose antecedents and present condition he claimed to be entirely familiar. There was, at first, some hesitation with reference to the identity of the person in question. Finally, it was admitted that the individual was Louis Riel: and I was informed that his excitement was exhibited chiefly when political subjects were introduced, and that his friends were anxious to see him safely guarded till they could get him out of the country. His eccentricities had already produced such animosity amongst certain sections of the people, that fears were entertained for his life should he be left at liberty.

I at once cheerfully consented to the proposition to have Louis David Riel admitted into the asylum the following day under the name of Louis R. David, and said I would do all I could to have his secret kept from sisters, keepers and strangers, as if he were insane, and I faithfully did keep my word for nearly ten years, always, when spoken to of him, declaring him to be as mad as a loon.

Am I ashamed of what I did? Not a bit of it. I believed him to be guilty of the murder he was accused of, and I believed every murderer to be either insane or a fool. The unfortunate man was not flying from justice; he was evading fanatics, that, judging them by the press of that day, were prepared to imbrue their hands in his blood. Yes, under similar circumstances, I



would conceal him again had he turned up a second time, or any other man similarly situated.

From the foregoing statement it will be seen that Louis D. Riel was placed in the asylum of St. Jean de Dieu as one of an uncertain condition of mind who required watching, and, for the time being, to protect him from his enemies; and knowing all these circumstances, I recommended the Rev. Mother Superior to admit him into the asylum as an insane man. And to be just to the Mother Superior, she let me understand that she preferred not to admit him, and she always wished him removed.

#### HIS ADMISSION.

On the 6th day of March I was sent for in the part of the asylum I was employed, and told to come and see Mr. David, who had arrived. I went into the room and saw the following tableau: A fine, handsome-looking man of about 30 years old, standing about the centre of the room; near to his right hand, Jean Baptiste, a keeper; near to his left hand, William —, a keeper; standing opposite to him, one of the Sisters, not the Mother Superior; and on the floor, his leather valise.

I was struck with the man's appearance. He looked an upright, honorable gentleman, and judging him by his appearance, I would never have supposed he could be guilty of the crime of which he was accused, and, at the moment, I felt great pity for him, and considered his friends should have done better for him than to send him into an insane asylum.

I walked directly up to him, to shake hands with him, and said, "I am glad to see you, Mr. David; my name is Dr. Howard." He started back and said, "Why do you call me David? My name is Louis David Riel," and thrusting his hand into the side pocket of his coat, he took from it a small prayer-book, and opening it at the fly-leaf, handed it to me, saying, "Look at my name there, Louis D. Riel, written by my dear sister." Quick as a flash of lightning, the Sister that was present snatched the book from our hands and tore out the fly-leaf, which she tore into pieces, saying, "You are only known here, sir, as Mr. David." A terrible scene followed, and I believe if the

guardians and I were not there, and she had not cleared out of the room, he would have torn her in pieces. For a few moments I certainly never saw a man more angry. When he calmed down, the poor fellow wept, and turning to me, said, "That was a gift given to me by my dear sister on my birthday, and in all my wanderings I always kept it near my heart." I may here mention that after this every one in the asylum knew who he was, and he always spoke of himself as Louis D. Riel.

Some time after, the keeper William disappeared from the asylum, and John Batiste has lately died of smallpox.

After the row, Mr. Riel went to his room, and from that day to the last day I saw him, May 13, 1876, he and I were the best of good friends, and I learned to value him highly. As a proof that he thought well of me, I beg to quote the following, taken from the *Montreal Star* of August 8, 1885. The article is headed "*Riel Loquitur. The last day but one of the trial at Regina.*"—"Grateful to my captors for their kindness to me at the very time the newspapers were raging to devour me. I thank the glorious General Middleton for his testimony that I possess my mental faculties. I felt that God was blessing me when these words were pronounced. I was in Beauport Asylum. Dr. Roy, over there, knows it, but I thank the Crown for destroying his testimony. I was in the lunatic asylum at Longue Pointe, near Montreal, also, and would like to see my old friends, Dr. Lachapelle and Dr. Howard, who treated me so charitably. Even if I am to die, I will have the satisfaction of knowing that I will not be regarded by all men as an insane person."

#### HIS EDUCATION AND RELIGION.

I found Riel a well read man. He was well posted in both Greek and Pagan philosophy, and it appeared to me he respected both better than he did Christianity; and he certainly spoke most respectably of Judaism, although he found fault with the Jews for having crucified Christ. He certainly ridiculed Protestantism as all humbug, and was far from considering Catholicity what he considered it should be. He never appeared to me to be a sincere Catholic, and he certainly did not speak respectfully of bishops, priests, or nuns.



I never saw him contented or happy in the asylum. He always spoke to me as one deceived by his friends and forsaken by them, and he felt that he was a prisoner, and daily urged upon me to procure his release and have him sent out of the country.

Sometimes he made some strange, ridiculous statements, but in such a way that I always felt he was simply humbugging, and did not believe what he was saying. For example, he at one time called himself Christ, that was crucified on Calvary, and was at that time undergoing another crucifixion. Another time he told me that it was lawful for a man to have at the same time three wives.

I never could satisfy myself thoroughly as to whether this sort of talk was not acting a part or an hallucination. He generally spoke to me as intelligently as any one could. He was not by any means a cheerful man, nor could I say he was sad, considering his position and surroundings. In fact I found him a loving and loveable man, and a charming man in conversation.

#### INCIDENTS WHILE HE WAS IN THE ASYLUM.

One morning I found him in the cell naked, with the exception that he had on a long straight-waistcoat. He began to laugh at his ridiculous position. I asked him what was the matter, and he told me that his leather valise had been cut open the night before and his letters taken out of it, which proved to him that it was to rob him of these valuable letters that he was brought into the asylum; that the loss of them was to him the loss of friends and their support and protection. He named his friends. He told me, when he saw that he was robbed of his letters, he was very angry and made a row, and that he was immediately seized by the keepers and forced into the straight waistcoat. This was a very short time after his admission into the asylum. From that time till he left the asylum he was sad, and seemed to be very suspicious of every one surrounding him, and particularly of his friends. He urged me to send him out of the asylum.

On another occasion, some time after, I found him in a similar position, restrained with the straight waistcoat. Before visiting him, I was told that while the priest was celebrating mass he



rushed into the church with a long stick, used in the game of pigeon-hole, in his hand, and literally swept the candles, ornaments, etc., with it off the altar. When I visited him he was all smiles, and told me he did it to see how the Mother Superior would act when he played the brute, as she did not know how to act or treat him when he acted as a gentleman. I advised him to keep quiet and continue to act the gentleman.

Soon after this, late in the month of April, I went one morning into his room and found him stark naked, standing up against the wall with his arms extended as if crucified. He told me he wanted the nuns to see him. I told him to go to bed. He did so, and spoke to me quite rationally.

One morning, about the 16th or 17th of May, 1876, I went into his room and found him in a great state of anxiety. I had never seen him before showing such great fear, nor did I ever see him speak or act so intellectually. He declared he was afraid of being murdered, and drew my attention to the fact that during the night the bars were removed from his window that he might try to escape. I looked and saw that the bars were removed, and that he could have escaped without any trouble. He said, "If I escaped last night through that window, I would have been murdered. Say nothing about it. I won't speak of it to any one; but for God's sake try and get me away."

The mother superior had constantly spoken to me to write to the Hon. Provincial Secretary to have him removed to Beauport. She particularly spoke to me for the last week or ten days, as she had heard it reported that the Orangemen of Montreal had heard that Riel was in the asylum, and had threatened to come down and burn it.

I did not speak to her of the iron bars being removed, nor of my intention, but I wrote a very strong letter to the Hon. Provincial Secretary, begging of him to send an order at once to have Riel removed to Beauport, for I feared for his life. On the 18th of May I shook hands warmly with poor Riel and bid him good-bye. On the 19th he departed, and I never saw him again. The keeper that placed him on the steamboat for Quebec that evening told me nothing more than that he called loudly for me when the boat was starting.

What I have written of poor Louis D. Riel I have not written for politicians nor for nationalists. I have simply written for the sake of imparting knowledge to the physical scientist or natural philosopher. I admitted Riel simply to protect him from his enemies, and for the same reason I recommended his discharge. I suspect his friends knew these facts, and that was why I was not brought to give evidence on his trial; because, if I were asked, "Did he know right from wrong?" I would have been obliged to answer "Yes." From his own statement on his trial, he was pleased to think I did not consider him *insane*. But I did consider him an abnormal man, a man with a teratological defect in his psycho-physical organization; and if he was guilty of the crime of which he was accused, and I believed he was, he was guilty because he was like all other criminals—not an intellectual man, but a fool, one of the millions of the immoral, criminal fools that I have already written of.

I found Riel to be a cautious, cunning man, and as responsible for his conduct as any other criminal; but I don't consider any criminal responsible for his conduct, for every criminal is such because of his abnormal psycho-physical organization.

While poor Riel was with me in the asylum, I have no recollection of ever speaking of him to any one but once—to two gentlemen, great friends of his, whom I overtook upon the road below the toll-gate. They were walking, and told me they were going down to see him. I took them down in my carriage. I told them he was as mad as a loon. They both laughed at me.

When I heard poor Riel was hung, I was very, very sorry. But I have known other men to have been hung that were greater fools than was poor Riel. I don't believe society should be troubled with criminal fools, but I do not believe they should be hung, although I see that the House of Commons in England has just rejected a motion to abolish capital punishment by a vote of 117 to 62. Well done, members of parliament, who don't know the physical cause of physical defect; who don't know that a man is an immoral criminal because he is not a physiological man.





